

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently amended) A method in a computing system for responding to a request for information about an item, comprising:

receiving at the computer system a request for information about the item from a user;

among a plurality of sellers, identifying via the computer system those (1) that are offering the item for sale, (2) whose availability level for the item exceeds a predetermined availability threshold, and (3) having a seller score relating to a plurality of different items offered for sale by the seller that exceeds a predetermined score threshold;

selecting via the computer system as the featured seller of the item, from the sellers identified among the plurality of sellers, the identified seller that is offering the item at the lowest price; and

replying via the computer system to the request for information with a web page associated with a web page containing both (1) information describing the item, and (2) a control that, when activated, adds the item to a shopping cart associated with the user so that the order will be placed from the featured seller when check out is performed, wherein the user ~~does not navigate to the featured seller Web site to~~ can complete the purchase from the featured seller via the website, without performing any subsequent interactions.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the identifying those (1) that are offering the item for sale, (2) whose availability level for the item exceeds a predetermined availability threshold, and (3) having a seller score relating to a plurality of different items offered for sale by the seller that exceeds a predetermined score threshold, and the selecting as the featured seller of the item, from the sellers identified among the plurality of sellers, the identified seller that is offering the item at the lowest price ~~is~~ are performed before the receiving the request for information about the item from the user.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the identifying and selecting is performed at a uniform time interval,

the method further comprising determining a most recently selected featured seller, where the most recently selected featured seller was selected using the acts of identifying those (1) that are offering the item for sale, (2) whose availability level for the item exceeds a predetermined availability threshold, and (3) having a seller score relating to a plurality of different items offered for sale by the seller that exceeds a predetermined score threshold, and selecting as the featured seller of the item, from the sellers identified among the plurality of sellers, the identified seller that is offering the item at the lowest price; and

wherein the most recently selected featured seller is used to reply to each of a plurality of received requests.

6. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the identifying and selecting is performed after the receiving.

7. (Currently amended) A computing system for responding to a request for information about an item, comprising:

a receiving subsystem, including program code stored computer readable memory that when executed by a processor performs the act of receiving a request for information about the item;

an identification subsystem, including program code stored computer readable memory that when executed by a processor performs the act of identifying, among a plurality of sellers, those (1) that are offering the item for sale, (2) whose availability level for the item exceeds a predetermined availability threshold, and (3) having a seller score relating to a plurality of different items offered for sale by the seller that exceeds a predetermined score threshold;

a selection subsystem, including program code stored computer readable memory that when executed by a processor performs the act of selecting from the sellers identified among the plurality of sellers as the featured seller of the item the identified seller that is offering the item at the lowest price; and

a reply subsystem, including program code stored computer readable memory that when executed by a processor performs the act of replying to the request for information with a web page associated with a website containing both (1) information describing the

item, and (2) a control that when activated, adds the item to a shopping cart and indicates that an order for the item is to be placed with the featured seller, wherein the user ~~does not navigate to the featured seller Web site to~~ can complete the purchase from the featured seller via the website, without performing any subsequent interactions.

8. (Previously presented) A computer readable medium comprising a page definition data structure and instructions which when executed by a processor are configured to display:

content specifying the display of information describing a selected item; and

content specifying the display of a shopping cart control that may be activated to add the selected item to a shopping cart to enable the ordering of the selected item from a distinguished one of a plurality of sellers, wherein items from multiple sellers can be added to the shopping cart, the distinguished seller being selected by offering the selected item for sale at the lowest price among those sellers of the plurality (1) that are offering the item for sale, (2) whose availability level for the selected item exceed a predetermined availability threshold, and (3) having a seller score that exceeds a predetermined score threshold.

9. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 8 wherein the data structure further comprises contents specifying the display of the control that may be activated to display ordering controls that may be activated to order the selected item from a different one of the plurality of sellers other than the distinguished seller.

10. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 8 wherein the data structure further contains contents specifying the display of one or more secondary controls that may be activated to order the selected item from a different one of the plurality of sellers other than the distinguished seller, wherein the control for the distinguished seller is displayed more prominently than the secondary controls.

11. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 8 wherein the data structure is a web page.

12-32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, wherein the featured seller is visually emphasized on the web page with respect to other sellers identified on the web page.

34. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, wherein the availability threshold is settable to different values.

35. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, wherein the availability threshold is settable to a time period corresponding to a plurality of days.

36. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing for display to a user who submitted the request a numerical value corresponding to the availability level of at least the featured seller.

37. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing for display to a user who submitted the request a numerical value corresponding to the availability level of sellers in addition to the featured seller.

38. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing for display to a user who submitted the request a numerical value corresponding to an availability level of at least one of the plurality of sellers, wherein the numerical value is settable to a value greater than one.

39. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing for display to a user who submitted the request a range corresponding to an availability level of at least one of the plurality of sellers, the range including a lower bound and an upper bound, wherein the upper bound is different than the lower bound.

40. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing a plurality of ordering controls corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of sellers, wherein activation of any of the plurality of controls will cause the item to be added to the same shopping cart.

41. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing a plurality of ordering controls on a first web page corresponding to sellers other than the featured seller, wherein regardless of which of the plurality of ordering controls is activated, the item is placed in the same shopping cart.

42. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing a control to a user who submitted the request, which when activated, orders the item from the seller without the user performing any subsequent interactions.

43. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising providing an indication as to which of the plurality of sellers has a fastest shipping time based on a determination as to which of the plurality of sellers has the fastest shipping time, wherein the determination is made using shipping time information corresponding to the plurality of sellers.

44. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 3, the method further comprising:

obtaining and providing for display to a user which submitted the request shipping timing information for the item with respect to the featured seller and at least one other seller.

45. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the featured seller is visually emphasized on the web page with respect to other sellers identified on the web page.

46. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the availability threshold is settable to different values.

47. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the availability threshold is settable to a time period corresponding to a plurality of days.

48. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide for display to a user who submitted the request a numerical value corresponding to the availability level of at least the featured seller.

49. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide for display to a user who submitted the request a numerical value corresponding to the availability level of sellers in addition to the featured seller.

50. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide for display to a user who submitted the request a numerical value corresponding to the availability level of at least one of the plurality of sellers, wherein the numerical value is settable to a value greater than one.

51. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide for display to a user who submitted the request

a range including an upper bound and a lower bound corresponding to an availability level of at least one of the plurality of sellers.

52. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide a plurality of ordering controls corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of sellers, wherein activation of any of the plurality of controls will cause the item to be added to the same shopping cart.

53. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide a plurality of ordering controls on a first web page corresponding to sellers other than the featured seller, wherein regardless of which of the plurality of ordering controls is activated, the item is placed in the user's shopping cart.

54. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide a control to a user who submitted the request, which when activated, orders the item from the seller without the user performing any subsequent interactions.

55. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, the method further comprising obtaining and providing for display to a user which submitted the request shipping timing information for the item with respect to the featured seller and at least one other seller.

56. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, wherein the computing system is further configured to provide an indication as to which of the plurality of sellers has a fastest shipping time.

57. (Previously presented) The computing system as defined in Claim 7, the method further comprising obtaining and providing for display to a user which submitted the request shipping timing information for the item with respect to the featured seller and at least one other seller.

58. (Currently amended) A method in a computing system for responding to a request for information about an item, comprising:

receiving at the computer system a request for information about the item provided by a user;

among a plurality of sellers, identifying using the computer system, those that are:

offering the item for sale;
have an availability level that satisfies a first criterion;
have a seller score relating to a plurality of different items offered for sale by the seller that satisfies a second criterion;
selecting among the identified sellers, using the computer system, as a distinguished seller a seller that is offering the item at a lowest price, offering the item for sale, has an availability level that satisfies the first criterion, and has a seller score that satisfies the second criterion;
providing, via the computer system, for display to the user:
a perceptible distinction with respect to the distinguished seller;
a price at which the distinguished seller is offering the item; and
a shopping cart control that, when activated, adds the item to a shopping cart associated with the user.

59. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising visually emphasizing the distinguished seller with respect to other sellers on a web page.

60. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising determining if the first criterion is satisfied by comparing the availability level with a first threshold having a value greater than one.

61. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, wherein the first criterion is having an availability within a specified quantity of days.

62. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising providing for display to the user a numerical value corresponding to the availability level of at least the distinguished seller.

63. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising providing for display to the user a numerical value corresponding to the availability level of sellers in addition to the distinguished seller.

64. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising providing for display to the user a numerical value corresponding to an availability level of at least one of the plurality of sellers, wherein the numerical value is greater than one.

65. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising providing for display to the user a range corresponding to an availability level of at least one of the plurality of sellers, wherein the range includes an upper bound and a lower bound.

66. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising providing a plurality of ordering controls corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of sellers, wherein activation of any of the plurality of controls will cause the item to be added to the same shopping cart.

67. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising providing a plurality of ordering controls on a first web page corresponding to sellers other than the distinguished seller, wherein regardless of which of the plurality of ordering controls is activated, the item is placed in the user's shopping cart.

68. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising providing a control to the user, which when activated, orders the item from the seller without the user performing any subsequent interactions.

69. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising obtaining providing an indication as to which of the plurality of sellers has a fastest shipping time.

70. (Previously presented) The method as defined in Claim 58, the method further comprising obtaining and providing for display to a user which submitted the request shipping timing information for the item with respect to the distinguished seller and at least one other seller.

71. (New) A method in a computing system for responding to a request for information about an item, comprising:

receiving at the computer system a request from a user for information about the item;

(a) among a plurality of sellers, identifying via the computer system those who meet a set of criteria including:

(1) that are offering the item for sale,

(2) whose availability level for the item exceeds a predetermined availability threshold, and

(3) having a seller score relating to a plurality of different items offered for sale by the seller that exceeds a predetermined score threshold;

wherein the availability threshold is settable to different time periods;

(b) after (a) is performed, selecting via the computer system from the sellers identified among the plurality of sellers, a seller that is offering the item at the lowest price relative to other sellers identified as meeting the set of criteria; and

replying via the computer system to the request for information with a user interface containing both:

(1) information describing the item, and

(2) a control that, when activated, adds the item to a shopping cart associated with the user so that the order will be placed from the distinguished seller when check out is performed;

suspending sellers associated with a low score; and

providing via the computer system for display to the user secondary ordering controls that may be activated to order the item from a different one of the plurality of sellers other than the distinguished seller, wherein the control for the distinguished seller is displayed more prominently than the secondary controls,

wherein activation of the control for the distinguished seller or any of the plurality of the secondary controls will cause the item to be added to the same shopping cart.

72. (New) The method as defined in Claim 71, the method further comprising, wherein before receiving the request for information about the item from the user, the computer system performs the acts of:

identifying sellers who meet the set of criteria including:

(1) that are offering the item for sale,

(2) whose availability level for the item exceeds a predetermined availability threshold,

(3) having a seller score relating to a plurality of different items offered for sale by the seller that exceeds a predetermined score threshold;

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selecting the distinguished seller, from the identified sellers, that is offering the item at the lowest price relative to other identified sellers.